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10/646,405	08/22/2003	Wei Wang	AMAT/3177.D1/CPI/L/B/PJS	9508
44257 7590 01/19/2007 PATTERSON & SHERIDAN, LLP 3040 POST OAK BOULEVARD, SUITE 1500 HOUSTON, TX 77056			EXAMINER MCDONALD, RODNEY GLENN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1753	
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE		MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE	
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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/646,405

Applicant(s)

WANG ET AL.

Examiner

Rodney G. McDonald

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 November 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-12 and 14-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-12 and 14-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.



**DETAILED ACTION**

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-4, 6 and 8-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Xu et al. (EP 0 758 148 A2).

Regarding claim 1, Xu et al. teach a method of depositing metallic film layers on a substrate comprising introducing a first gas is introduced proximate a sputtering target disposed inside the vacuum chamber, wherein the sputtering target is made of a material made of titanium. Applying power to the sputtering target and a coil disposed between the sputtering target and the substrate in the presence of only the first gas. A second gas is introduced into the chamber as sputtering and ionization continues. The second gas is introduced proximate the surface of the substrate in the presence of power applied to the sputter target and to the coil since sputtering and ionization continues. A power of 1.5 KW at 2 MHZ was applied to the coil. 5 KW power was applied to the titanium target. The substrate is biased by an AC bias of 90 Watts at 350 kHz resulting in a DC self bias of 70V. (Column 13 lines 46-58; Column 14 lines 1-9; Column 15 lines 15-32)

Regarding claim 2, the substrate and the coil is biased. (Column 15 lines 15-32)

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Regarding claim 3, the second gas is introduced proximate to the upper surface of the substrate. (Column 13 lines 46-58; Column 14 lines 1-9) Here "proximate" is a relative term and introducing nitrogen gas into the chamber would qualify as "proximate" to the substrate.

Regarding claim 4, the power is applied to the sputter target and the coil to initiate plasma. (Column 13 lines 46-58; Column 14 lines 1-9)

Regarding claim 6, the first gas is introduced to encourage gas stabilization. (Column 13 lines 46-58; Column 14 lines 1-9)

Regarding claim 8, the first gas can be argon. (Column 15 lines 28-31)

Regarding claim 9, the second gas can be nitrogen. (Column 15 lines 29-30)

Regarding claim 10, the first gas is inert. (Column 15 lines 28-31)

Regarding claim 11, the gas is an active gas such as nitrogen. (Column 15 lines 29-30)

Regarding claim 12, the second gas is introduced after the power is applied to the sputtering target and the coil. (Column 13 lines 46-58; Column 14 lines 1-9)

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of

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the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. (EP 0 758 148 A2) in view of Lantsman (U.S. Pat. 5,830,330).

Xu et al. is discussed above and all is as applies above. (See Xu et al. discussed above)

The difference between Xu et al. and the present claims is the ramping of the power to the target and coil. (Claim 7)

Regarding claim 7, Lantsman teach in Fig. 3 ramping the power to the target and coil to perform sputtering. (See Fig. 3)

The motivation for ramping the powers to the coil and target is that it allows for sustaining the plasma at low pressures. (See Abstract)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Xu et al. by ramping the power to the coil and target as taught by Lantsman because it allows for sustaining the plasma at low pressures.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. (EP 0 758 148) in view of Ngan (EP 0 840 351).

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Xu et al. is discussed above and all is as applies above. (See Xu et al. discussed above)

The difference between Xu et al. and the present claims is the coil made of titanium.

Regarding claim 14, Ngan teach utilizing a target and coil made of titanium. (Column 12 lines 40-43)

The motivation for utilizing a target and coil made of a material such as titanium is that it allows for depositing a layer more uniformly. (Column 9 lines 5-8)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Xu et al. by utilizing a target and coil made of a material such as titanium as taught by Ngan because it allows for depositing a layer more uniformly.

Claims 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. (EP 0 758 148 A2) in view of Sone (U.S. Pat. 6,451,184).

Xu et al. is discussed above and all is as applies above. (See Xu et al. discussed above)

The differences between Xu et al. and the present claims is where the first gas creates a higher partial pressure of first gas proximate to the sputtering target than at the upper surface of the substrate (Claim 15) and where the second gas creates a higher partial pressure of second gas proximate to the surface of the substrate than at the upper surface of the target (Claim 16).

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Regarding claims 15 and 16, Sone teaches partitioning the gas space such that reactive gas is contained between the partition member and the substrate and the sputter gas is maintained between the target and the partition member. This keeps the partial pressure of reactive gas higher at the substrate surface than at the target surface and keeps the partial pressure of argon gas higher at the target surface than at the substrate surface. (See Abstract) Furthermore, Sone recognizes that the prior art has attempted to keep the sputtering gas confined to the target and the reactive gas confined to the substrate. (Column 2 lines 17-22)

The motivation for utilizing a high sputtering gas pressure at the target and a higher reactive gas pressure at the substrate is that it allows for production of compound films with in-plane uniform thickness and optical and electrical characteristics. (Column 3 lines 22-25)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Xu et al. by utilizing a high sputtering gas pressure at the target and a higher reactive gas pressure at the substrate as taught by Sone because it allows for production of compound films with in-plane uniform thickness and optical and electrical.

Claim 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. (EP 0 758 148 A2) in view of Gilboa et al. (U.S. Pat. 5,108,569).

Xu et al. is discussed above and all is as applies above. (See Xu et al. discussed above)



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The differences not yet discussed is the use of a shield ring and shield support member.

Regarding claim 17, Gilboa et al. teach a shield ring and shield support member in Fig. 2 such that when the shield ring is supported by the substrate support member a gas can be introduced to the upper surface of the substrate. (See Gilboa et al. Fig. 2)

The motivation for utilizing a shield ring and shield support member is that it allows for clamping the wafer to the substrate support. (Column 8 lines 37-38)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Xu et al. by utilizing a shield ring and support member as taught by Gilboa et al. because it allows for clamping the wafer to the substrate support.

Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. (EP 0 758 148 A2) in view of Chikako et al. (Japan 06-041733).

Xu et al. is discussed above and all is as applies above. (See Xu et al. discussed above)

The difference between Xu et al. and the present claims is that the introduction of reactive gas through the central portion of the substrate holder.

Regarding claim 18, Chikako et al. teach introducing reactive gas through the center of a substrate holder. (See Abstract; Figure 1)

The motivation introducing the reactive gas through the center of the substrate is that it allows for suppressing reaction products from building up on the surface of the target. (See Abstract)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Xu et al. by utilizing a reactive gas inlet at the center of the substrate holder as taught by Chikako et al. because it allows for suppressing reaction products from building up on the surface of the target.

Claims 19- 22 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. (EP 0 758 148 A2) in view of Sone (U.S. Pat. 6,451,184) and Yamaguchi (U.S. Pat. 6,203,674).

Xu et al. is discussed above and all is as applies above. (See Xu et al. discussed above)

The differences not yet discussed is where the first gas creates a higher partial pressure of first gas proximate to the sputtering target than at the upper surface of the substrate, where the second gas creates a higher partial pressure of second gas proximate to the surface of the substrate than at the upper surface of the target and the deposition of metallic layers.

Sone teaches partitioning the gas space such that reactive gas is contained between the partition member and the substrate and the sputter gas is maintained between the target and the partition member. This keeps the partial pressure of reactive gas higher at the substrate surface than at the target surface and keeps the partial pressure of argon gas higher at the target surface than at the substrate surface. (See Abstract) Furthermore, Sone recognizes that the prior art has attempted to keep the sputtering gas confined to the target and the reactive gas confined to the substrate. (Column 2 lines 17-22)

The motivation for utilizing a high sputtering gas pressure at the target and a higher reactive gas pressure at the substrate is that it allows for production of compound films with in-plane uniform thickness and optical and electrical characteristics. (Column 3 lines 22-25)

Regarding the deposition of metallic film layers, Yamaguchi teach depositing a metallic mode TiN film by sputtering a target containing a layer amount of Ti components. The selective formation of metallic mode TiN film can be performed by adjusting the ratio of Ar gas and N<sub>2</sub> gas or setting the flow rate of N<sub>2</sub> to a predetermined rate or more. (Column 3 lines 1-13)

The motivation for depositing a metallic mode TiN film is that it allows for forming a layer for a semiconductor device. (Column 1 lines 5-20)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Xu et al. by utilizing a high sputtering gas pressure at the target and a higher reactive gas pressure at the substrate as taught by Sone and depositing metallic layer as taught by Yamaguchi because it allows for production of compound films with in-plane uniform thickness and optical and electrical and for forming a layer for a semiconductor device.

Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. in view of Sone and Yamaguchi further in view of Maniv et al. as applied to claims 19, 20, 21 and 26 above, and further in view of Ngan (EP 840 351).

The difference not yet discussed is where the coil is made of titanium (Claim 23).

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Regarding claim 23, Ngan teach utilizing a target and coil made of titanium.

(Column 12 lines 40-43)

The motivation for utilizing a target and coil made of a material such as titanium is that it allows for depositing a layer more uniformly. (Column 9 lines 5-8)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have utilized a target and coil made of titanium as taught by Ngan because it allows for depositing a layer more uniformly.

Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. in view of Sone and Yamaguchi as applied to claims 19-22 and 26 above, and further in view of Gilboa et al. (U.S. Pat. 5,108,569).

The difference not yet discussed is the use of a shield ring and shield support member. (Claim 24)

Regarding claim 24, Gilboa et al. teach a shield ring and shield support member in Fig. 2 such that when the shield ring is supported by the substrate support member a gas can be introduced to the upper surface of the substrate. (See Gilboa et al. Fig. 2)

The motivation for utilizing a shield ring and shield support member is that it allows for clamping the wafer to the substrate support. (Column 8 lines 37-38)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have utilized a shield ring and support member as taught by Gilboa et al. because it allows for clamping the wafer to the substrate support.

Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. in view of Sone and Yamaguchi as applied to claims 19-22 and 26 above, and further in view of Chikako et al. (Japan 06-041733).

The difference not yet discussed is the use of a central port for a reactive gas centrally disposed through a substrate holder. (Claim 25)

Regarding claim 25, Chikako et al. teach introducing reactive gas through the center of a substrate holder. (See Abstract; Figure 1)

The motivation introducing the reactive gas through the center of the substrate is that it allows for suppressing reaction products from building up on the surface of the target. (See Abstract)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have utilized a reactive gas inlet at the center of the substrate holder as taught by Chikako et al. because it allows for suppressing reaction products from building up on the surface of the target.

Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. (EP 0 758 148 A2) in view of Sone (U.S. Pat. 6,451,184), Ngan (EP 840 351) and Yamaguchi (U.S. Pat. 6,203,674).

Xu et al. is discussed above and all is as applies above. (See Xu et al. discussed above)

The differences between Xu et al. and the present claims is having a higher partial pressure of argon at the target than at the substrate, having a higher partial

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pressure of reactive gas near the substrate than at the target, the coil made of titanium, and deposition of metallic layers.

Regarding claim 27, Sone teaches partitioning the gas space such that reactive gas is contained between the partition member and the substrate and the sputter gas is maintained between the target and the partition member. This keeps the partial pressure of reactive gas higher at the substrate surface than at the target surface and keeps the partial pressure of argon gas higher at the target surface than at the substrate surface. (See Abstract) Furthermore, Sone recognizes that the prior art has attempted to keep the sputtering gas confined to the target and the reactive gas confined to the substrate. (Column 2 lines 17-22)

The motivation for utilizing a high sputtering gas pressure at the target and a higher reactive gas pressure at the substrate is that it allows for production of compound films with in-plane uniform thickness and optical and electrical characteristics. (Column 3 lines 22-25)

Regarding claim 27, Ngan teach utilizing a target and coil made of titanium. (Column 12 lines 40-43)

The motivation for utilizing a target and coil made of a material such as titanium is that it allows for depositing a layer more uniformly. (Column 9 lines 5-8)

Regarding the deposition of metallic film layers, Yamaguchi teach depositing a metallic mode TiN film by sputtering a target containing a layer amount of Ti components. The selective formation of metallic mode TiN film can be performed by

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adjusting the ratio of Ar gas and N<sub>2</sub> gas or setting the flow rate of N<sub>2</sub> to a predetermined rate or more. (Column 3 lines 1-13)

The motivation for depositing a metallic mode TiN film is that it allows for forming a layer for a semiconductor device. (Column 1 lines 5-20)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have utilized a higher partial pressure of argon at the target than at the substrate, to have utilized a higher partial pressure of reactive gas near the substrate than at the target as taught by Sone to have utilized a target made of titanium and coil made of titanium as taught by Ngan, and to have deposited metallic layers as taught by Yamaguchi because it allows for depositing a layer uniformly with desired optical and electrical characteristics with increasing transparency and for depositing layers for semiconductors.

Claims 28-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. (EP 0758 148) in view of Sone (U.S. Pat. 6,451,184), Takehara (U.S. Pat. 5,340,459) and Yamaguchi (U.S. Pat. 6,203,674).

Xu et al. is discussed above and all is as applies above. (See Xu et al.)

The difference between Tadashi et al. and the present claims is that having a high partial pressure of an inert gas inside the vacuum chamber proximate the sputtering target than at an upper surface of the substrate is not discussed and introducing a mixture of gas near the target and introducing a second gas near the substrate is not discussed and depositing metallic layers is not discussed.

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Sone teaches partitioning the gas space such that reactive gas is contained between the partition member and the substrate and the sputter gas is maintained between the target and the partition member. This keeps the partial pressure of reactive gas higher at the substrate surface than at the target surface and keeps the partial pressure of argon gas higher at the target surface than at the substrate surface. (See Abstract) Furthermore, Sone recognizes that the prior art has attempted to keep the sputtering gas confined to the target and the reactive gas confined to the substrate. (Column 2 lines 17-22)

The motivation for utilizing a high sputtering gas pressure at the target and a higher reactive gas pressure at the substrate is that it allows for production of compound films with in-plane uniform thickness and optical and electrical characteristics. (Column 3 lines 22-25)

Takehara teach a pipe 3 for introducing a mixture of gas near the target. Takehara teach a pipe 4 for introducing a second gas near the substrate. (See abstract)

The motivation for utilizing a mixture of gas near the target and a second gas near the substrate is that it allows for equalizing the reaction of a reactive gas with a target material above the surface of the target. (Column 1 lines 60-63)

Regarding the deposition of metallic layers, Yamaguchi teach depositing a metallic mode TiN film by sputtering a target containing a layer amount of Ti components. The selective formation of metallic mode TiN film can be performed by



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adjusting the ratio of Ar gas and N<sub>2</sub> gas or setting the flow rate of N<sub>2</sub> to a predetermined rate or more. (Column 3 lines 1-13)

The motivation for depositing a metallic mode TiN film is that it allows for forming a layer for a semiconductor device. (Column 1 lines 5-20)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Xu et al. by keeping the partial pressure of the inert gas higher at the target surface than at the substrate surface as taught by Sone et al., to have introduced a mixture of gas near the target and a second gas near the substrate as taught by Takehara and to have deposited metallic layers as taught by Yamaguchi because it allows for producing uniform thin films and for equalizing the reaction of a reactive gas with a target material above the surface of the target and for depositing metallic layers for semiconductors.

Claim 32 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu et al. in view of Sone et al., Takehara and Yamaguchi as applied to claims 28-31 above, and further in view of Ngan (EP 840 351).

The differences not yet discussed are where the target is made of titanium, tantalum or tungsten and where the coil is made of titanium, tantalum and tungsten.

Regarding claim 32, Ngan teach utilizing a target and coil made of titanium. (Column 12 lines 40-43)

The motivation for utilizing a target and coil made of a material such as titanium is that it allows for depositing a layer more uniformly. (Column 9 lines 5-8)

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have utilized a target and coil made of titanium as taught by Ngan because it allows for depositing a layer more uniformly.

### ***Response to Arguments***

Applicant's arguments filed November 13, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

At the outset applicant's amendment overcomes the 35 U.S.C. 112 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph rejection.

In response to Applicant's argument that the prior art does not teach applying power to the target and the coil when introducing the second gas, it is argued that newly cited Xu et al. teach this amended feature of the claim. Specifically, Xu et al. teach depositing in a single chamber. Initially the titanium target and the coil are applied with power and argon introduced to sputter a titanium layer. The coil power and the target power are maintained (i.e. as sputtering and ionization are maintained) and a second gas is introduced to deposit a titanium nitride film. In this instance the second gas is introduced in the presence of power applied to the target and the coil. Since the claim allows for deposition when the first gas is introduced due to the comprising language of the claim Xu et al. is believed to teach the claimed steps. (See Xu et al. discussed above)

### ***Conclusion***

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP

§ 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).


A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rodney G. McDonald whose telephone number is 571-272-1340. The examiner can normally be reached on M- Th with Every other Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nam X. Nguyen can be reached on 571-272-1342. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

  
Rodney G. McDonald  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 1753

RM  
January 10, 2006